

Message Text

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73

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 998

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT SNAR TU

SUBJ: OPIUM POPPY AS A CAMPAIGN ISSUE

REFS: (A) ANKARA 6840 (B) ANKARA 7025 (C) ANKARA 7390

(D) ANKARA 7538 (E) ISTANBUL 3377

1. WHILE THE OPIUM POPPY ISSUE HAS NOT RPT NOT BEEN EXTENSIVELY DEBATED IN THIS YEAR'S PARTIAL SENATE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, BOTH MAJOR PARTIES HAVE PRESENTED THEMSELVES AS CHAMPIONS OF THE POPPY FARMERS.

A. SPEAKING IN THE POPPY GROWING AREA, REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) CHAIRMAN ECEVIT NOTED THAT IT WAS HIS GOVERNMENT THAT TOOK THE DECISION IN 1974 TO RESUME POPPY GROWING. HOWEVER, WHAT HE EMPHASIZED WAS THAT IN MAKING THAT DECISION HE SHOWED HIS WILLINGNESS TO STAND UP AGAINST U.S. PRESSURE ON A MATTER

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OF NATIONAL HONOR. (IN AFYON AND USAK, TWO PROVINCES IN THE

POPPY REGION IN WHICH SENATE SEATS ARE AT STAKE, SOME OF THE NORMALLY CONSERVATIVE RURAL VOTERS MAY EXPRESS AT THE BALLOT BOX THEIR THANKS FOR ECEVIT FOR ENDING THE POPPY BAN.)

B. WITH OBVIOUS HOPES OF BLUNTING ECEVIT'S APPEAL ON THIS ISSUE, PRIMIN DEMIREL TOLD AN USAK ELECTION RALLY SEPTEMBER 27 THAT THE POPPY PLANTING AREA ALLOWED EACH FARMER WOULD BE INCREASED (REF C). LATER, DEMIREL TOLD AN ISTANBUL RALLY ON OCTOBER 9 THAT THE RPP SHOULD NOT RPT NOT PRESENT ITSELF AS THE "OPIUM HERO" AND THAT ANY GOVERNMENT THAT CAME TO POWER AFTER THE MARTIAL LAW PERIOD (1971-73) WOULD HAVE LIFTED THE POPPY BAN (REF E).

2. THE RANGEL ADMENDMENT TO S.2230 DREW A REACTION NOT RPT NOT AS REGARDS THE POPPY ISSUE ITSELF BUT BECAUSE OF THE ERRONEOUS INTERPRETATION THAT THE GOT WOULD HAVE TO "ACCOUNT TO THE AMERICAN CONGRESS ON THE SUBJECT OF OPIUM POPPY FARMING" (REF D).

3. WE BELIEVE IT IS VERY NOTEWORTHY THAT IN THE CAMPAIGN NO RPT NO QUESTION WAS RAISED REGARDING THE BASIC ISSUE OF CONTINUING THE POPPY STRAW PROCESS. SIMILARLY, NO RPT NO COMPLAINTS WERE RAISED REGARDING THE PRICES PAID TO FARMERS OR THE STRICTNESS OF CONTROLS. THE ONLY PUBLICIZED REFERENCES TO EXPANDING THE POPPY GROWING REGION WERE MADE IN MALATYA AND AMASYA, WHERE THE NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) ALLUDED TO ITS EFFORTS TO HAVE POPPY CULTIVATION PERMITTED IN THOSE PROVINCES.
MACOMBER

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